

Babbitt said he has had difficulty recalling exactly what he said to Eckstein but that when he read Eckstein's account in the newspaper he recalled that it is "quite possible that I said something about Harold Ickes wants a decision;" or that "the front office wants a decision."⁶⁸⁶ Babbitt described it as a "dissembling way"⁶⁸⁷ of ending the meeting. Babbitt was certain he did not say that Ickes "instructed me to do anything, with or without delay."⁶⁸⁸ Babbitt told the investigators he did not know if he addressed timing in his statement about Ickes during the Eckstein meeting; he did not recall saying anything about timing. Babbitt also said he did not recall posing a question to Eckstein about campaign contributions the opposing tribes made to the DNC, nor did he recall knowing information about the specific tribes or the amounts of money involved when he met with Eckstein. Babbitt said he did not discuss the Eckstein meeting with anyone after the meeting was over. He said the first time he discussed it was in connection with the lawsuit filed by the applicants over the Department's denial of their application.⁶⁸⁹

Babbitt offered an explanation for why he would have used Ickes's name in his conversation with Eckstein. He stated, "I'm invoking the White House, for better or worse."⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁶*Id.* at 5.

⁶⁸⁷*Id.*

⁶⁸⁸*Id.*

⁶⁸⁹During his testimony in this Office's investigation, Babbitt's best recollection was that he never recounted to any Interior official "who said what to whom" during his July 14, 1995, meeting with Eckstein in the context of preparing his Aug. 30, 1996, letter to Sen. McCain or his Oct. 10, 1997, letter to Sen. Thompson. Babbitt G.J. Test., July 7, 1999, at 240.

⁶⁹⁰DOJ Prelim. Babbitt Int. at 5.